

VZCZCXRO5182
PP RUEHDBU RUEHPW
DE RUEHMO #4929 2830617
ZNY CCCCC ZZH
P 100617Z OCT 07
FM AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 4499
INFO RUCNAFG/AFGHANISTAN COLLECTIVE
RUEHDX/MOSCOW POLITICAL COLLECTIVE
RUCNDT/USMISSION USUN NEW YORK 0364

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOSCOW 004929

SIPDIS

SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 10/03/2017
TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [MASS](#) [AF](#) [RS](#)
SUBJECT: RUSSIA WILL PROVIDE MILITARY ASSISTANCE TO
AFGHANISTAN

Classified By: Ambassador William J. Burns for reasons 1.4 (b/d).

[11.](#) (C) Summary: Concern over Afghanistan's deteriorating security has led Russia to propose a significant military assistance program to support the Karzai government. The MFA told us October 5 that a draft military aid package awaits Putin's approval. The program will include the direct transfer of armaments, vehicles, small arms and ammunition valued at hundreds of millions of dollars. The MFA reiterated Russia's support for the U.S.'s and NATO's role in Afghanistan, cautioning not to read too much into its recent UNSC abstention on the ISAF mandate renewal resolution; the abstention was solely related to concerns about potential broader application of the new language on OEF maritime operations. End Summary.

[12.](#) (C) On October 5, Head of the MFA Afghanistan Desk Yuriy Khokhlov previewed plans to restart a significant military assistance program to help the Afghan Government. The draft plan to provide hundreds of millions of dollars worth of armaments, vehicles, small arms and ammunition, following September 19 Interministerial Commission's approval, is awaiting Putin's endorsement. According to Khokhlov, Russia hopes to soon begin discussions with the Afghan Government on establishing end use verification and control mechanisms to ensure that the armaments are not stolen or sold to the Taliban. Although there is understandable reluctance to send Russian military advisors to Afghanistan, this has not been definitively ruled out.

[13.](#) (C) Despite concerns about Karzai's weakness, Khokhlov reiterated that Russia continues to support the Karzai Government. Moscow's major preoccupation is that, amid the deteriorating situation, the Taliban now control close to 40 percent of Afghanistan. Russian remains opposed to any reprochement with the Taliban or attempt to include them in the government, which could result in the Taliban's return to power and use of Afghanistan as a base for destabilizing Central Asia.

[14.](#) (C) Khokhlov volunteered that Russia continues to support the U.S. and NATO role in Afghanistan. MFA International Organizations Department Director Aleksandr Konuzin separately clarified that the Russian abstention on the UNSC resolution renewing ISAF's mandate was prompted by Ministry of Defense concerns about new language on OEF's maritime operations. Konuzin took our point that the language was introduced to help the Japanese, but commented that his Defense colleagues remained wary about implications for potential future U.S. military operations in the Persian Gulf and boarding of Russian vessels.

[15.](#) (C) Comment: If approved as described, the Russian military assistance program would represent a major step forward in Russia's support for the Afghan central government. While the draft program obviously needs to be

tailored to Afghan needs, it already sounds better than Russia's 2002-2005 Afghan military assistance program, which ended before the entire \$200 million worth of material could be delivered.

Burns